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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to examine the relationship between the belief system structure (dogmatism) of principals and media specialists and their role expectations for the media specialist, and whether agreement by principals and media specialists on the role of the media specialist was related to the similarity of their belief system orientations. Thirty-one pairs of principals and media specialists from public high schools responded to the Short Form Dogmatism Scale and a Rank Ordering Questionnaire assessing the relative importance of selected media specialist tasks. Results indicated there were main effect differences between principals and media specialists for instructional design and utilization, and between open and closed-minded respondents for awareness services. Similarity of dogmatism scores of principal-media specialist pairs was related to similarity of rank ordering of media specialist tasks. It appears that principals and media specialists tend to rank the more traditional media specialist tasks as more important than the more progressive media specialist tasks, although media specialists tended to be somewhat more progressive. In addition, it appears that dogmatism, as a personality variable, may be a factor in influencing a professional relationship, especially during initial contacts. (Author/CMV)

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A STUDY OF THE BELIEF SYSTEM STRUCTURE OF PRINCIPALS AND MEDIA SPECIALISTS AS RELATED TO THEIR ROLE EXPECTATIONS FOR THE MEDIA SPECIALIST

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A paper presented to the Research and Theory Division at the annual meeting of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, Kansas City, Missouri, Tuesday, April 18, 1978.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the belief system structure (dogmatism) of principals and media specialists and their role expectations for the media specialist. A second purpose was to ascertain whether agreement by principals and media specialists on the role of the latter was related to the similarity of their belief system orientations. Thirty-one pairs of principals and media specialists responded to the Short Form Dogmatism Scale and a Rank Ordering Questionnaire, assessing the relative improtance of selected media specialist tasks. There were significant main effect differences between principals and media specialists for two tasks: instructional design and utilization, and between open and closed-minded respondents for awareness services. No significant interactions were observed. It was also observed that similarity of dogmatism scores of principal-media specialist pairs was related to similarity of rank ordering of media specialist tasks. It appears that principals and media specialists tend to rank the more traditional media specialist tasks as more important than the more progressive media specialist tasks, although media specialists tended to be somewhat more progressive. In addition, it appears that dogmatism, as a personality variable, may be a factor in influencing a professional relationship, especially during initial contacts.

A STUDY OF THE BELIEF SYSTEM STRUCTURE OF PRINCIPALS AND MEDIA SPECIALISTS AS RELATED TO THEIR ROLE EXPECTATIONS FOR THE MEDIA SPECIALIST

Problem

One of the most significant educational innovations in the last thirty years has been the incorporation of educational media, and its accompanying technology into the day-to-day teaching and learning activities of schools. This development has led to the development of extensive programs for the training of media specialists to serve the schools as experts in these new fields. Therefore, it is appropriate to study the impact of these new professionals on the schools in which they work.

Carlson (1965) suggested that the success of media programs in schools is dependent on the principal's attitude toward the program. His contention was supported by Brickell (1961), Lepper (1965), Miles(1965), Tompkins (in Trump, 1967), and others.

Sarason (1971) discussed the effect specialists might have on principals. He pointed to four possible areas of conflict between the two:

1. The specialist is expected to have knowledge and skills not possessed by the principal.
2. Some specialists experience conflict between their professional standards and their principal's expectations.
3. The principal may feel that the specialist does not have an overall grasp of what's going on in his school.

4. There may be a triangular conflict between the specialist, the principal, and the teacher. (pp. 126-129)

One source of potential conflict receiving some attention was that of personality characteristics of individuals who define the role expectations for a particular person or job. Coursen (1976) described the principal's personality as one factor which may play a key role in determining the success or failure of a media program.

In examining the relationship between personality and role, Ferneau (1954) found that when an administrator sought advice from a consultant or specialist, both parties evaluated the consultation more favorably when they were in agreement on the consultant's role.

Getzels and Guba also conducted extensive research into the relationship between role and personality. They determined that an individual's behavior was a function of his role and personality (1954, p. 164) and that role conflict occurred when such an individual found himself in a situation where he was expected to fill two roles that presented, "inconsistent, contradictory, or even mutually exclusive expectations (p. 165)." Research which supported this relationship (1955) enabled the authors to develop a theoretical model of the relationship between role expectations and personality (1957).

Such a relationship is depicted in figure 1.

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insert figure 1 about here

Getzels, Lipham, and Campbell (1968) summarized this crucial relationship:

> It seems clear that the proper functioning of certain role relationships in educational settings, as elsewhere, depend on the degree of overlap in the perception of expectations by several complementary role incumbents in the given interaction. (pp. 117-118)

Dogmatism, a personality construct of open- and closed-mindedness in individuals has been studied for over 20 years. Rokeach (1960) developed the Dogmatism Scale to measure this construct which he contended measures, in part, an individual's receptivity to new ideas or beliefs. Although dogmatism has been found to be unrelated to intelligence (Kemp, 1965; Rokeach, 1960), the construct has been shown to be related to critical thinking (Rokeach, 1960), party-line thinking (Rokeach, 1960), personality adjustment (Kemp, 1961), anxiety (Kemp, 1965), and resistance to educational innovation (Ramer, 1967).

Rokeach concluded that ideas were organized in relation to their congruence with individual beliefs. Beliefs which were not congruent with existing ones were organized along a continuum of similarity to what is congruent (p. 395). New beliefs which were too dissimilar to existing ones tended to be rejected. This area of rejection was considered to be much broader for closed-minded than for open-minded individuals.

Besides Ramer's study (1967) which indicated that dogmatism is directly related to resistance to educational innovations among chief school administrators, O'Reilly and Fish (1976) found dogmatism similarly related to resistance to educational innovation in a group of teachers and Hudspeth (1966) found that the more open-minded members of a college faculty were less resistant to a particular educational innovation, educational media. Finally, Esposito (1971) found that open- and closed-minded instructional supervisors had differing perceptions of their role.

Based on these findings the current study was organized to determine if dogmatism, as a specific personality factor, is related to the role expectations held for the media specialist by both the specialists themselves and their principals.

The basic Getzels-Guba model was adjusted to represent the variables under consideration in the current study. These adjusted models are depicted in figures 2 and 3.

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insert figures 2 and 3 about here

Hypotheses

In order to generate information relevant to the problem of the study, the following hypotheses were proposed for testing:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean rankings of each media specialist task for relatively open-minded and relatively closed-minded principals.

2. There is no significant difference between the mean rankings of each media specialist task for relatively open-minded and relatively closed-minded media specialists.

3. There is no significant difference between the mean rankings of each media specialist task for relatively open-minded principals and relatively open-minded media specialists.

4. There is no significant difference between the mean rankings of each media specialist task for relatively open-minded principals and relatively closed-minded media specialists.

5 There is no significant difference between the mean rankings of each media specialist task for relatively closed-minded principals and relatively open-minded media specialists.

6. There is no significant difference between the mean rankings of each media specialist task for relatively closed-minded principals and relatively closed-minded media specialists.

7. There is no significant relationship between the correlation of each principal-media specialist pair's rank ordering of media specialist tasks and the similarity of the relative openness of their belief systems.

Methodology

Sample

The population for this study consisted of all principals of public high schools and certified media specialists or head librarians who had administrative responsibility in high school media centers in a two-county area in Northeast Ohio. The total number of public high schools in the population area was 37.

The investigator solicited permission to conduct the study from the superintendent of each school district in the population area. Permission was granted to contact the principal and media specialist or librarian in all 37 high schools.

Each principal and media specialist was contacted and a visit by the investigator was arranged. Following the initial contact, four schools, for a variety of reasons, refused to participate in the study. A principal in another high school was taken to the hospital suddenly and his school was also eliminated. Both the principal and the media specialist had to respond to the instrument in order for their school to be included in the study. All information was kept confidential.

Because many persons who were asked to respond to the questionnaire indicated a preference to mail their survey back to the investigator at a later date, returns were slow in coming in. Data gathering was conducted during the months of April and May, 1977 with a cut-off date of June 1. At the cut-off date an additional school did not respond leaving a final total of 31 high schools out of 37, or 84% of the schools in the population participating in the study.

Instrumentation

The Short Form Dogmatism Scale (Troldahal & Powell, 1965) was used to assess the relative degree of open-mindedness of the subjects in the groups to be studied.

In comparing the 20-item SFDS with the standard 40-item form, the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula was used to obtain a split-half reliability estimate of .94 which is within the range of reliability coefficients reported by Rokeach, from .68 to .93 on the 40-item scale (Rokeach, pp. 89-90). The SFDS itself has a reported split-half reliability of .79.

Rokeach, using the method on known groups, tested the validity of the 40-item scale. He found groups selected as high dogmatics (relatively closed-minded) scored significantly different (.01) from groups selected as low dogmatics (relatively open-minded). Isaac and Michael (1971) support the use of the Rokeach validity data to the SFDS by stating that a change of test length has a great effect on reliability, but a much smaller effect on validity (p. 132).

Loertscher (1973) developed the Importance of Media Services Scale in which he ascertained perceptions of media services in 40 Indiana senior high schools by teachers and media center staffs. A panel of experts reviewed the instrument and a pilot study was conducted in an attempt to remove redundant items and to make sure all acknowledged media center services were included in the instrument. This helped to establish the reliability and validity of the scale.

From the 64-item instrument, eight major media services were identified, these being in the areas of accessibility, awareness, evaluation, instructional design, utilization, acquisition, professional services, and production (p. 59).

Swenson (1974) used these eight categories in developing the Rank Ordering Questionnaire (ROQ), which provided the subject with an instrument to rank, in order of importance, the eight major media services which were considered to cover most of the tasks engaged in by the media specialist.

The Rank Ordering Questionnaire (ROQ) was used in this study to assess both the principals' and media specialists' perceptions of the importance of the various tasks performed by the media specialist, thus providing an indication of these two individuals' role expectations of the latter.

Statistical Procedures

The general technique used in the study was a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). This procedure allowed the comparison of two factors of an independent variable with a dependent variable. The two-way analysis of variance produced F-ratios for the two factors of the independent variable (A and B) and the interaction of these two factors (A x B) as they related to the dependent variable.

In testing the first six hypotheses, the two-way ANOVA technique was conducted eight times, once for each of the media specialist tasks. For these procedures, the independent variables were open- or closed-mindedness and principals and media specialists, and the dependent variable was the mean ranking for each media specialist task.

In testing the seventh hypothesis, Spearman rank-order correlations for each principal-media specialist pair's rank ordering of media specialist tasks were generated and transformed into z-scores. These scores comprised the dependent variable to be compared with the

four groupings of principals and media specialists: open-minded principals and media specialists, closed-minded principals and media specialists, open-minded principals and closed-minded media specialists, and closed-minded principals and open-minded media specialists (independent variable).

In each analysis, the distribution of observations within the cells of the two-way ANOVA were somewhat unequal. Because of this unbalanced cell distribution, an unweighted means analysis (Glass & Stanley, p. 440) was used to create an equal balance of observations. An alpha level, which would indicate significant differences between means, was set at .05.

Results

Results from the Short Form Dogmatism Scale for the sample studied indicated that principals and media specialists scored similarily on the SFDS. Principals in the sample had a range of scores from 43 to 84, with a mean of 59.13 and a standard deviation of 11.46. Media specialists in the sample had a range of scores from 38 to 76, with a mean of 54.58 and a standard deviation of 10.53. The difference between the means of principals and media specialists on the SFDS was not significant. These means, taken together, had a range of 38 to 84, with a grand mean of 56.85 and a standard deviation of 10.91.

By definition, individuals in a sample group considered to be relatively closed-minded are those who score above the grand mean for the sample, and individuals considered to be relatively open-minded are those who score at or below the grand mean for the group. In this sample of principals (N=31), 14 were classified as relatively open-minded and 17 as relatively closed-minded. Of the media specialists (N=31), 17

were classified as relatively open-minded and 14 as relatively closed-minded.

Results from the Rank Ordering Questionnaire indicated that principals and media specialists in the sample had different perceptions of the relative importance of the eight media specialist tasks as reflected in their rank ordering of those tasks. The data revealed that principals ranked the media specialist task of instructional design services significantly lower ($p < .05$) than did media specialists. Media specialists, on the other hand, ranked utilization services significantly lower ($p < .001$) than principals. A summary of the rank ordering of media specialists tasks by principals and media specialists is provided in Table 1.

insert table 1 about here

When data from the Short Form Dogmatism Scale is analyzed with the rank ordering data, closed-minded respondents appear to rank awareness services significantly higher than did open-minded respondents (although the actual rank ordering of this task was unchanged). A summary of the rank ordering of media specialist tasks by open- and closed-minded respondents is provided in Table 2.

insert table 2 about here

It was hypothesized that there would be no interaction between occupation (principal-media specialist) and belief system structure (open-closed-mindedness) for each media specialist task. This hypotheses could not be rejected for any task although the interaction appeared to approach significance for instructional design and awareness services.

A summary of the interaction is provided in Table 3.

insert table 3 about here

It was further hypothesized that the correlation of the rank ordering of media specialist tasks for each media specialist-principal pair would be unrelated to the similarity of their belief system structure. This hypothesis also could not be rejected, although closed-minded principals paired with open-minded media specialists recorded a somewhat lower mean rank order correlation, as depicted in Table 4.

insert table 4 about here

Discussion

Analysis of the rank ordering data for principals and media specialists provides some interesting conclusions. Principals tended to rank the more traditional media specialist tasks (i.e., providing accessibility, awareness, utilization, and acquisition services) as more important than the more progressive media specialist tasks of providing instructional design, professional, and evaluation services. Media specialists also tended to follow this trend with one significant exception: they tended to rank instructional design services significantly higher than principals. These data are similar to those of Loertscher (1973) and Pfister (1976), who found that the more progressive services were ranked lower. The higher ranking of instructional design services by media specialists is inconsistent with previous findings.

For principals, then, it seems that they still do not consider the role of the media specialist to be expanded to include involvement with the instructional activities of teachers. Media specialists, while still regarding evaluation and professional services at a relatively low level, seem to have begun to perceive themselves as helping teachers design instruction and participating more extensively in curriculum decision-making. The high regard media specialists apparently have for providing instructional design services may stem from the expanded emphasis in instructional design-oriented curricula in media specialist training programs. An examination of various media specialist training programs in a number of colleges and universities reveals a much smaller curricular emphasis on the other two progressive services (e.g., evaluation and professional services).

Another area where a significant difference in the rank ordering of media specialist tasks existed between the sample of media specialists and principals was in the providing of utilization services. Principals, both open- and closed-minded, tended to rate utilization services significantly higher than media specialists. Since utilization usually involves the training of teachers to use media and its accompanying technology effectively in the classroom, media specialists may feel that this is a more appropriate task for pre- and inservice teacher training programs. Media specialists may not see themselves as playing a major role in or may not feel competent enough to conduct such teacher training programs.

Principals, both open- and closed-minded, tended to rank awareness services lower, although not significantly lower than media specialists.

It appears that media specialists may feel that the "selling" of their program is more important than the principal may feel it is.

Finally, it should be noted that both principals and media specialists rated production services quite low. Speculation as to the reasons for this low rating include a possible lack of production facilities in the school and a feeling that a production service, because of its technical nature, is not an appropriate function for a media specialist who is in charge of a school media center.

Thus the differences in rank ordering of media specialist tasks between principals and media specialists indicates that, for this sample, there appears to be relative agreement between the two parties on the role of the media specialist in providing accessibility, awareness, evaluation, acquisition, professional, and production services, and disagreement between the two parties in providing instructional design and utilization services. Generally, media specialists seem more inclined to view their role as a more expanded one, in terms of involvement with the instructional activities of the school, whereas principals seem more inclined to view the role of a media specialist as providing only the more traditional services. It is possible that principals may also see the media specialist as fulfilling an administrative rather than an instructional role.

When media specialists and principals are grouped together and identified only as either open- or closed-minded, there appears to be only one media specialist task where differences are apparent to a significant degree. Those individuals, both principals and media specialists, who are relatively closed-minded tended to rank awareness services

significantly higher than those individuals who are relatively open-minded. This may be due to the fact that closed-minded individuals may feel somewhat less secure about the position and programs with which they are associated and thus perceive a greater need to spend more time and effort in selling the program and convincing others of its worth.

The results of this study indicate that there was no significant interaction between occupation (principal-media specialist) and belief system structure (open-closed-mindedness) for any of the eight media specialist tasks. There were, however, two tasks, awareness and instructional design services, where a significant interaction was approached.

Another hypothesis dealt with the congruency of rank ordering of media specialist tasks as compared with the similarity of belief system structure for media specialist-principal pairs (i.e., principals and media specialists working together in the same school). Although no significant interaction was found, closed-minded media specialists paired with closed-minded principals, and open-minded media specialists paired with open-minded principals had a higher degree of similarity in the way they rank-ordered media specialist tasks. Media specialist-principal pairs with dissimilar belief system structures had a lower degree of similarity of rank ordering of tasks. If future research produces similar results, the interaction might support Rokeach's contention that persons with similar belief system structures will tend to be closer to agreement on items and ideas of mutual interest.

Despite the conclusions that have been drawn from this research, the fact remains that there were no significant interactions observed. It is possible to speculate on a number of reasons why this may be so.

First, it may be that differences in belief system structure influence role perception only during initial contact. When two people work together over a considerable period of time, dogmatism may cease to be a factor. Differences in belief system structure may be an aspect of personality that can be dealt with through compromise, accommodation or avoidance. That is, when two persons initially work together, their perceptions of each other may be influenced strongly by their own belief system structures. But over time, they may become more skilled in recognizing personality differences and in identifying appropriate ways of dealing with them. One member of the role set may accommodate the personality preferences of the other or he may avoid those areas of perceived personality conflict. These responses are similar to those of students who must master new and different modes of learning in order to be successful students, or workers who must adjust to the different administrative styles of their employers. Thus, differences in belief system structure may influence only the rate at which persons of differing degrees of open-mindedness will develop skill in working comfortably. Further research instruments might identify the amount of time members of a role set (i.e., principal-media specialist) have worked together.

Second, rank ordering of tasks requires an analytic skill on the part of the respondents. Since Rokeach contends that dogmatism may be more apparent when the subjects are involved in activities requiring synthesis, the Rank Ordering Questionnaire might be more useful if restructured to reflect this type of skill. The Delphi technique may be one type of procedure which could be used, as it creates a condition whereby the respondent is involved in data generation.

There are a number of implications that can be drawn from this study.

1. It appears that principals have not as yet accepted the expanded role of the media specialist as an instructional decision-maker and that programs to increase their awareness and acceptance of this role are warranted. Such pre- or in-service activities might be in the form of workshops which extend administrators' concept of the responsibilities of this new type of educator. As principals and media specialists concur to a greater degree on the proper role of the media specialist, role conflict is less likely to occur.

2. It is also apparent that when principal-media specialist pairs have similar belief system structures (i.e., closed-closed, open-open), they may tend to exhibit a greater degree of consensus on the role of the media specialist. It may be that media specialists who seek employment in schools in which the principal appears to have a similar belief system orientation may find adjustment to the new situation easier than had their belief system orientations been dissimilar. The possibility of conflict appears to be especially high when an open-minded media specialist encounters a closed-minded principal. Knowing this, a media specialist might be able to assess the potential for role conflict during initial encounters and develop appropriate strategies for conflict avoidance. If differences in certain personality variables (e.g., dogmatism) do result in differing role perceptions and/or role conflict, school personnel training programs might include experiences in recognizing such traits.

3. A supplementary finding, based upon informal discussions with the respondents, indicated that agreement on the role of the media specialist seems to increase when principals and media specialists have

some experiences in each other's field via participation in courses or workshops. As it is apparent that both parties need to know more about each other's role within the school, cross-involvement in, or at least some exposure to, academic programs of other members of the role set may be warranted. It appears that alteration of the curricula used in preparing needed specialists and principals should involve broadened exposure to the frame of reference of other professionals within the school.

4. If the trends indicated in this study are supported in future research, educational programs for principals and media specialists may be designed to give these people training in recognizing and understanding dogmatism and other personality characteristics in their fellow workers.

In fact, any group or individual within a school which interacts with other groups or individuals merits serious study. The more that is known about how these various components of a complex organization such as a school function and interact with each other, the better able all educators will be in creating more effective educational environments.

FIGURES AND TABLES

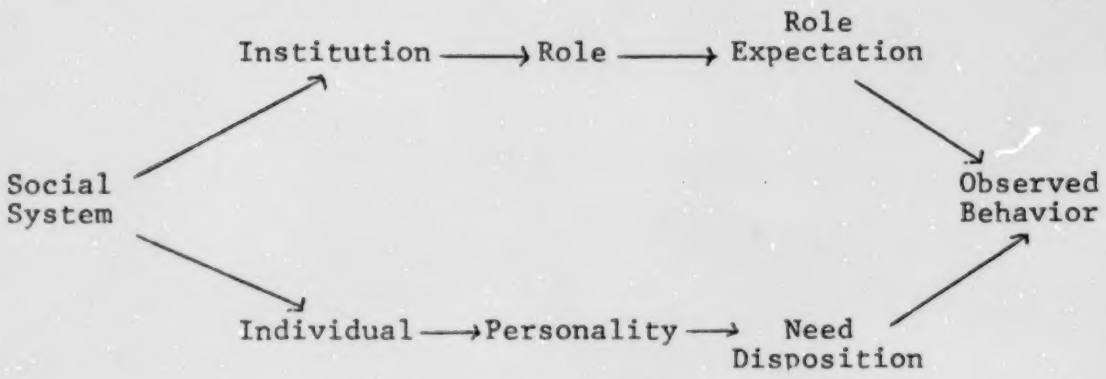

Figure 1. The Getzels-Guba Model of the Relationship between personality and role.

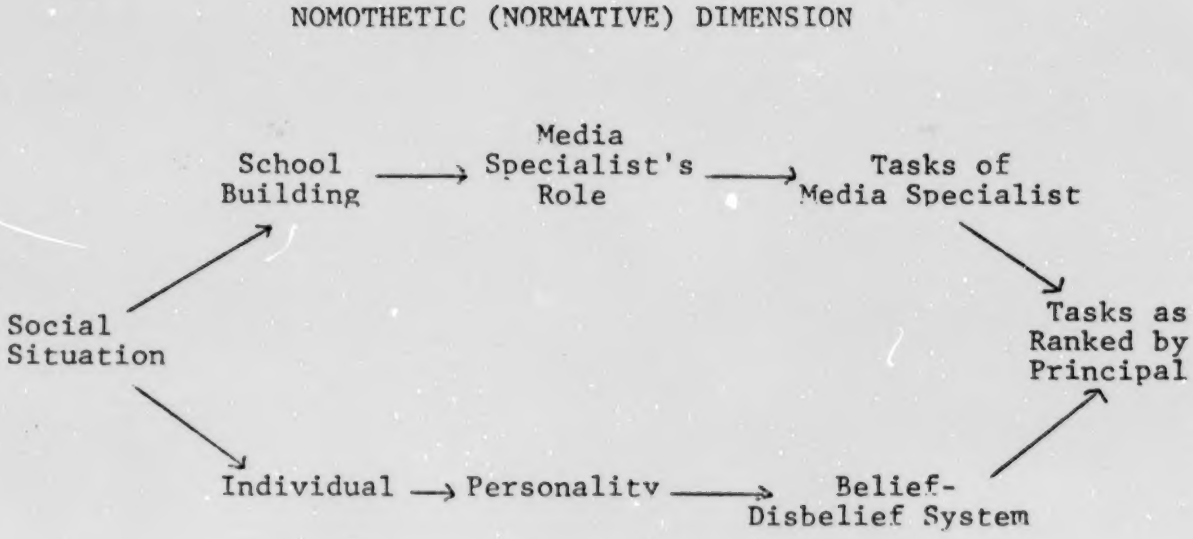

Figure 2. The relationship between the relative open-mindedness of the principal and his/her role expectations for the media specialist.

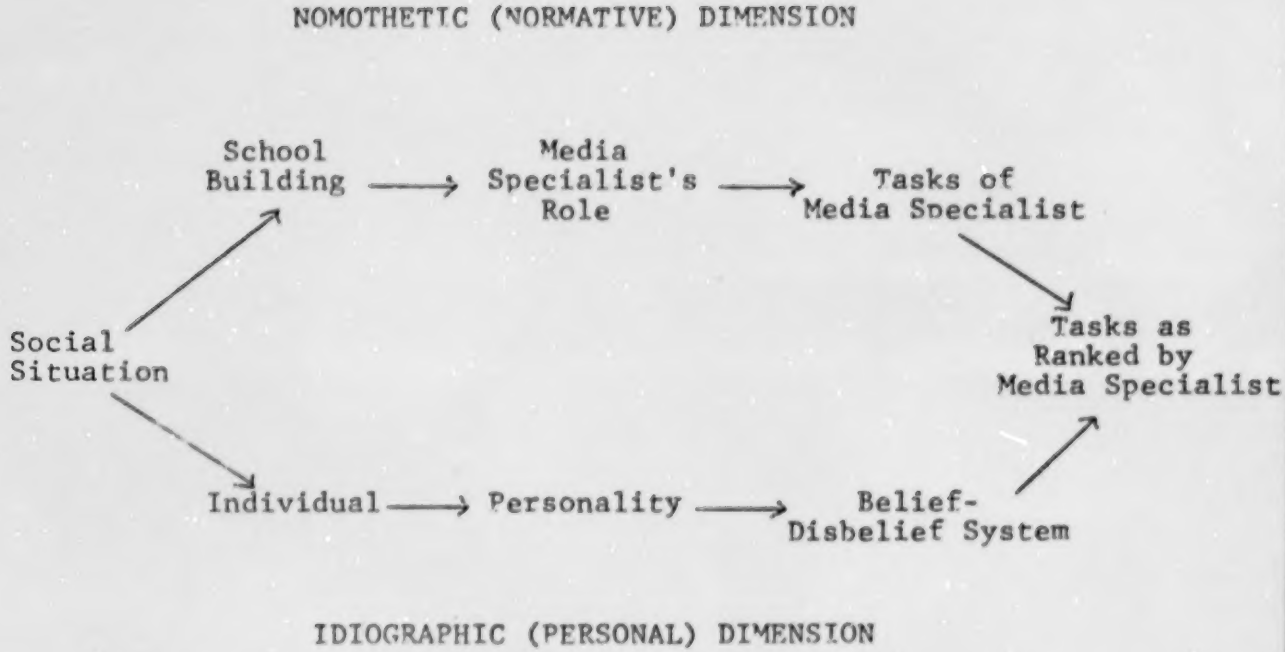

Figure 3. The relationship between the relative open-mindedness of the media specialist and his/her role expectation for him/herself.

TABLE 1

Mean Rank Ordering of Media Specialist Tasks
by Principals and Media Specialists

Media Specialist Task	$\bar{X}_p$	$\bar{X}_m$	F
1. Accessibility	2.89 (1)[a]	3.64 (3)[b]	1.58
2. Awareness	2.93 (2)	2.28 (1)	3.66
3. Evaluation	5.87 (7)	5.58 (6)	0.39
4. Instructional Design	4.61 (5)	3.45 (2)	5.00*
5. Utilization	3.45 (3)	5.03 (5)	11.14**
6. Acquisition	4.46 (4)	3.79 (4)	1.97
7. Professional	5.80 (6)	6.13 (8)	0.36
8. Production	5.99 (8)	5.92 (7)	0.02

*$p < .05$

**$p < .001$

[a]ranking of media specialist tasks for principals.

[b]ranking of media specialist tasks for media specialists.

TABLE 2

Mean Rank Ordering of Media Specialist Tasks
by Open- and Closed-minded Respondents

Media Specialist Task	$\bar{X}_o$	$\bar{X}_c$	F
1. Accessibility	3.46 (2)[a]	3.06 (2)[b]	0.45
2. Awareness	3.00 (1)	2.22 (1)	5.09*
3. Evaluation	5.40 (6)	6.05 (7)	1.94
4. Instructional Design	4.23 (4)	3.83 (3)	0.60
5. Utilization	4.42 (5)	4.06 (4)	0.60
6. Acquisition	3.93 (3)	4.32 (5)	0.65
7. Professional	5.59 (7)	6.34 (8)	1.80
8. Production	5.96 (8)	5.95 (6)	0.99

*$p < .05$

[a]ranking of media specialist tasks for open-minded respondents.

[b]ranking of media specialist tasks for closed-minded respondents.

TABLE 3

Mean Rank Ordering of Media Specialist Tasks by
Open- and Closed-minded Principals and Media Specialists

Media Specialist Task	Open-minded $\bar{X}_p$	Open-minded $\bar{X}_m$	Closed-minded $\bar{X}_p$	Closed-minded $\bar{X}_m$	F
1. Accessibility	2.93 (1)[a]	4.00 (4)[b]	2.82 (2)[c]	3.29 (2)[d]	0.29
2. Awareness	3.64 (3)	2.35 (1)	2.24 (1)	2.21 (1)	3.43
3. Evaluation	5.57 (7)	5.24 (5)	6.18 (7)	5.93 (7)	0.001
4. Instructional Design	5.26 (6)	3.18 (2)	3.94 (4)	3.71 (3)	3.24
5. Utilization	3.43 (2)	5.41 (6)	3.47 (3)	4.64 (5)	0.74
6. Acquisition	4.21 (4)	3.65 (3)	4.71 (5)	3.93 (4)	0.05
7. Professional	5.07 (5)	6.12 (8)	6.53 (8)	6.14 (8)	1.69
8. Production	5.86 (8)	6.06 (7)	6.12 (6)	5.79 (6)	0.57

[a]ranking of medis specialist tasks for open-minded principals.

[b]ranking of media specialist tasks for open-minded media specialists.

[c]ranking of media specialist tasks for closed-minded principals.

[d]ranking of media specialist tasks for closed-minded media specialists.

TABLE 4

Mean Rank Order Correlations of
Principal-Media Specialist Pairs
(transformed to z-scores)

Independent Variable Combinations	N	r_z
Closed-minded Principals and Closed-minded Media Specialists	7	0.528
Closed-minded Principals and Open-minded Media Specialists	7	0.266
Open-minded Principals and Open-minded Media Specialists	7	0.548
Open-minded Principals and Closed-minded Media Specialists	10	0.499

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